

## **State Guidelines – Accessibility to Information Technology for Individuals with Disabilities**

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### **Presenter**

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### **Purpose of Appearance**

To propose the establishment of new Information Services Board guidelines that provide individuals with disabilities equal access to information technology.

### **Previous ISB Appearances**

No previous appearances.

### **Staff Recommendation to the Board**

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the State Guidelines – Accessibility to Information Technology for Individuals with Disabilities.

### **Background**

The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and other national laws and regulations ensure individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities for employment, state and local government services, and public accommodations.

The state of Washington is committed to providing access to information and services to the public and employees, including individuals with disabilities.

In 1996, Governor Lowry issued Executive Order 96-04 Implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act. EO 96-04 states "As agencies develop, design, or redesign new technology systems, the agency director shall assure that the agency has taken reasonable steps to eliminate barriers that current users with disabilities face in utilizing these systems..."

Washington State published accessibility guidelines in 1999 as part of the Web Presentation Guidelines for Access Washington. This proposal formalizes, updates, and broadens those guidelines available at: <http://dis.wa.gov/webguidelines/accessibility.htm>.

Effective June 21, 2001, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by federal agencies be accessible to people with disabilities unless it creates an "undue burden."

This proposal creates new Information Services Board Accessibility Guidelines and incorporates Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act standards as "best practices." While the state's existing guidelines are focused mainly on Web sites and Web-based applications, the proposed guidelines cover a broader set of Information Technology including Web sites, Web-based applications, software systems, procurement, and electronically published documents.

According to the Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center (ITTATC), more than 30 states have incorporated Section 508 into their laws, policies, or standards, as of September 2004. The ITTATC Overview of State Accessibility Laws, Policies, Standards and Other Resources is available at: <http://www.ittatc.org/laws/stateLawAtGlance.cfm>.